

THE CIA LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

DDA/MS

Long-Range Planning in the federal government is coming of age. In an environment of escalating requirements, more complex systems, longer lead times, greater interrelationships among program elements, and heightened competition for budget dollars, both Congress and the Office of Management and Budget are demanding better planning from Agency heads to support budget requests. The CIA Executive Committee's (EXCOM's) response to these pressures was to initiate an Agency-level long-range planning process. The goals of the effort are to provide senior Agency management with a basis for setting directions the Agency will follow in the future and to integrate planning already being conducted at the directorate and lower levels.

With the exception of short-lived efforts in the midsixties and early seventies, there has been no Agency-wide planning process. The budget process includes outyear projections but does not lend itself to true long-range planning because of its focus on resource constraints and solving near-term resource allocation problems. There are planning activities at the directorate and lower management levels that result in multiyear plans for specific activities, such as the Office of Communications Strategic Plan and the Office of Data Processing Long-Range Management Plan, but they have generally lacked Agency-level executive perspective and review and have not been integrated into Agency budget requests.

Beginning in May 1980, an ad hoc Agency Planning Group representing the four directorates, Comptroller, and EXCOM Staff developed a list of five Foreign Policy Issues concerning intelligence topics likely to be of vital interest to U.S. policymakers and five Management Issues concerning how the Agency will conduct its business. In keeping with EXCOM's wish to avoid the planning becoming a purely staff exercise, each of the planning issues was then assigned to a working group comprised of appropriate line managers with the task of developing detailed background material, likely trends, and alternative courses of action. During the months of October and November, the issues were presented to EXCOM by the working groups.

At a final wrap-up session in December, EXCOM reviewed a series of conclusions regarding the planning process. One of the more important questions addressed was what form the planning decisions should take. It had always been anticipated that the results of the planning would be published in the DDCI's guidance letter to the Comptroller for the FY-1983 Program. After a discussion where EXCOM members agreed that the biggest value of planning lay in the exchange of information between the working groups and EXCOM and the resulting discussions that take place among EXCOM members outside the EXCOM forum, it was decided that the guidance should not be in the form of specific decisions on each issue. Rather, the guidance would reflect those problem areas that should be emphasized in constructing the FY-1983 Program. Actual problem solving will occur at lower managerial levels, in reaction to the issue papers and EXCOM discussions and in response to Program guidance.

EXCOM endorsed a continued planning effort in 1981, building on 1980 planning and again relying heavily on line organizations for input. By formalizing the planning process, Agency managers at all levels are compelled to plan for their future environment, requirements, and capabilities. The informal approach to planning favored by EXCOM provides the membership with a common understanding of the problems confronting the Agency, yet retains the flexibility and responsiveness possible only by retaining our decentralized authorities.

1980 Long-Range Planning Issues

Foreign Policy Issues

- Soviet Union/East Europe
- China
- Third World
- Competition for World Resources
- Our Allies

Management Issues

- Maintaining An Overseas Presence
- Intelligence Collection
- Covert Action
- Communications—Staff and Covert
- Records—Declassification and FOIA

CUSTO
-25X1
AP
m25X1

✓ Annual
? deputy directors

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1